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ABSTRACT

This handbook is intended for use as a guide for computer-based systems of career information engaged in self-study and for consultant-evaluators conducting onsite evaluations. It also provides accreditation information for governmental or private organizations which may support these systems and for the public. Section 1 describes the purposes of the Association of Computer-Based Systems of Career Information (ACSCI) and the membership categories in the association, and lists member systems for 1979. Section 2 contains the basic materials related to self-study and evaluation by the ACSCI, including a brief description of the steps in the ACSCI membership and accrediting process for associate members, candidates for accreditation, and full members (reaffirmation). Appendixes, amounting to over one-half of the handbook, include an associate member application form, standards and self-evaluation guides for system assessment (organization, information development, marketing and user services, delivery services, systems, evaluation, and system finance), and format for the system status report. (YLB)

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HANDBOOK ON

STANDARDS & ACCREDITATION

[redacted]

Association of Computer-Based Systems
for Career Information

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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Information contained herein concerning programs, procedures, requirements, and standards is subject to change without notice. Please contact ACSCI to insure that you have the most current edition of this handbook.

FOREWORD

This Handbook on Standards and Accreditation was prepared by the Committee on Standards and Accreditation of ACSCI as a guide for computer-based systems of career information engaged in self-study and for consultant-evaluators conducting on-site evaluations. It provides accreditation information for governmental or private organizations which may support these systems and for the public. This Handbook is about the accrediting process appropriate at this stage in the development of these systems.

For many of the procedures and approaches reported, we have relied heavily on the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Handbook on Accreditation. We are indebted to the North Central Association for the use of their materials.

The Handbook is presented in two sections. Section I describes the purposes of ACSCI and the membership categories in the association and lists member systems for 1979. Section II contains the basic materials related to self-study and evaluation by the ACSCI.

It is hoped that this Handbook will prove useful to all who are concerned with delivering high quality career information to citizens who need it. Comments regarding the materials and suggestions for improvement are, of course, welcome.

ACSCI Committee On Standards and Accreditation

Dr. Richard Manley, Chair (Minnesota)
Ms. Marilyn Maze (California)
Mr. Peter Oemichen (Wisconsin)
Mr. Warren Wolff* (Colorado SOICC)

* Mr. Wolff is Director of the Colorado Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and formerly was Information Development Manager of COCIS. Mr. Wolff is the principal author of this Handbook.

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SECTION I

SECTION I

PURPOSES

The Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information (ACSCI) is a non-profit corporation whose purposes are:

A. To participate in a united effort to identify, develop, enhance, and use various private and public sources of occupational and educational information and to encourage the commitment of resources to this effort;

B. To share common experiences, exchange ideas, develop common products, and maximize the use of available resources in operating computer-based services;

C. To provide a basis for adopting computer-based standards, cooperating in the solution of technical problems and developing the systems;

D. To establish and support a Career Information System Clearinghouse;

E. To cooperate with other persons and organizations of any kind involved in delivering career information, to establish national standards, and to provide for education and public information;

F. To support the establishment of career information services and the commitment of resources to this effort;

G. To establish technical assistance and training programs for both members and prospective members.

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERS

There are three classes of members: 1) full members, 2) associate members, and 3) supporting members.

Full members are organizations of any kind that are involved on a non-profit basis in the organization and implementation of a computer-based system dealing with career information and who display a clear expression to satisfy the standards of this association. Full members have voting rights. Hereinafter full members are referred to as "members".

Associate members are organizations of any kind that are involved on a non-profit basis in the organization and planning of a computer-based system dealing with career information and who display a clear expression to satisfy the standards of the association. Associate members have no voting rights but are entitled to participate in all association projects and to receive other benefits set by the Board of Directors.

Supporting members are individuals or organizations of any kind which support the purposes of the association and pay the annual supporting members membership fee as set by the Board of Directors. Supporting members

have no voting rights but are entitled to benefits as set by the Board of Directors.

The association particularly acknowledges the assistance of Time Share Inc. whose representative, Ms. Linda Kobylorz, assisted in the review of this handbook.

MEMBER SYSTEMS - 1980

Colorado Career Information System
Ms. Pauline A. Parish, Director

EUREKA, The California Career Information System
Mr. Don Mayall, Director

Massachusetts Occupational Information System
Dr. Thomas A. Welch, Director

Minnesota Career Information System
Mr. Douglas S. Young, Director

MetroGuide (New York City Board of Education)
Ms. Deborah E. Perlmutter, Director

North Dakota Career Information System (via the NDOICC)
Mr. Peter Hurda, Director
Associate Member

Ohio Occupational Information System
Ms. Deborah Lindberg, Director

Oregon Career Information System
Dr. Bruce McKinlay, Director

Washington Occupational Information System
Mr. Elton Chase, Director

Wisconsin Career Information System
Dr. Roger H. Lambert, Director

SECTION II

SELF-EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION

THE MEANING OF ACCREDITATION

INTRODUCTION

Voluntary institutional accreditation is a process unique in the United States. It arose in response to the need for the establishment of agencies to attest to the quality of educational endeavors. Because computer-based career information systems (hereinafter called "systems") were created to improve the quality of career information services, it is appropriate that high standards be set and maintained. Publishing the standards of accreditation of these systems is one way of promoting quality.

Accreditation is a nongovernmental, voluntary means for systems to set the characteristics, the qualities, and the manner in which those systems seeking and holding membership are judged. By providing a means of assessment which encourages improvement and response to the needs of a system's constituencies, accreditation serves the public interest.

Accreditation is a means used by ACSCI (hereinafter called "the association") for purposes of:

- o fostering excellence through the development of criteria and guidelines for assessing effectiveness;
- o encouraging improvement of effectiveness through continuous self-study and evaluation;
- o assuring constituencies and the general public that the accredited systems have clearly defined and appropriate objectives, have established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appear to be accomplishing them substantially, and are so organized, staffed and supported that they can be expected to continue to do so;
- o providing counsel and assistance to established and developing systems;
- o protecting systems against encroachments which might jeopardize their educational effectiveness.

Accreditation is attained through a process of evaluation and periodic review of a total system by the association. The policies and procedures for accreditation have been developed and are published to promote cooperation and consistency among agencies and institutions which provide funding, those which provide information for system use and the systems themselves.

GENERAL ISSUES

Introduction

This Handbook provides a brief description of the steps in the membership and accrediting process. Procedures provided here are not intended to pertain to the accrediting of supporting members in the association. In order to present

the steps as clearly and consistently as possible, each of the three classes of association membership are described below. The categories of accreditation are:

A. seeking and maintaining associate member status - Associate Members

B. seeking full membership and accreditation status - Candidates for Accreditation

C. reaffirmation of accreditation - Full Members

Information applicable to each of these three categories is identified under each of the steps.

Steps in Accreditation

"Procedures for Accreditation", presented below, should be supplemented by contact with the president of the association or the membership chairperson. Each system applying for full membership and accreditation is supported by a member of the Committee on Standards and Accreditation of the association who is assigned to assist in the required accreditation activities.

Consultant Services

In addition to assistance provided by the Standards and Accreditation Committee, consultant services are available through the association's Committee on Technical Assistance and Training. The president of the association will suggest and coordinate services provided by association consultants. The using system is billed for consultations according to a standard fee schedule.

Status Definitions

A. Associate Members

1. Planning for Accreditation

Associate membership is a status of affiliation with the association wherein a system/organization has joined the association, but is not yet ready for accreditation. Associate membership provides for participation, with consulting, technical assistance and other services appropriate to establishment or development. Typically systems/organizations in the planning or early development stages join the association as associate members.

2. Candidate for Accreditation

Candidate for Accreditation is a status of affiliation with the association which indicates that a system has joined the association and is progressing toward accreditation. Attainment of this affiliate status does not automatically assure accreditation; however, candidates are encouraged to achieve full member status within two years after the system becomes a candidate.

A system/organization that is already in operation may choose to join as an associate member for a period or to become an immediate candidate for accreditation and full membership. In either case, the associate membership fee set by the board must be paid.

B. Full Members

Systems who are full members are accredited by the association, which indicates that they offer users a satisfactory level of service as implied by the objectives and expectations of the association.

Conditions of Eligibility

A. Associate Members

Any system/organization may apply for associate membership in the association provided it has as its intended purpose to: 1) provide career information, 2) utilize computers as an integral part of the system, and 3) seek accreditation from the association at some time.

B. Candidate for Accreditation

A candidate for accreditation is implementing a computer-based career information system and making progress toward meeting the standards of the association.

C. Full Members

A system seeking reaffirmation of accreditation has already met the conditions of eligibility.

PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION

A. Associate Members (seeking and maintaining associate member status)

The following information and procedures are provided for systems/organizations seeking associate membership in the association.

1. Procedure

Associate membership will be granted by the association upon satisfactorily meeting the following requirements:

a. an application in writing, signed by a responsible official of the system/organization, has been received;

b. payment of associate membership dues. The dues year begins upon acceptance into associate membership status.

2. Acceptance

Associate membership will be designated by the association upon the recommendation of the Standards and Accreditation Committee.

3. Renewal

Associate membership may be renewed beyond the initial two years upon request of the associate member, concurrence of the Standards and Accreditation Committee, and approval of the association board. Associate members seeking an extension beyond the initial two years will be required to file a work plan showing how and when their organization will achieve full accreditation. The plan will include technical assistance and training from the association to assist in the process.

B. Candidates for Accreditation (seeking full membership status)

The following information and procedures will be followed in the initial accreditation process.

1. Initiation of the Application

a. Accreditation Cycle

Accreditation will be determined on a pre-arranged cycle. It involves preparation of two documents by the candidate and a site visit by an accreditation team. The documents are a status report and a letter authorizing an accreditation visit. Candidates for accreditation should be evaluated within two years from date of application for candidacy. Following the initial accreditation, and acceptance as a full member of the association, each member will be evaluated every three years.

b. Documents

The chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee is responsible for providing candidates with all pertinent documents (i.e., the self-evaluation guide) that are to be completed and submitted prior to the evaluation visit.

2. Preparation for Accreditation

a. "Standards and Self-evaluation Guide for System Assessment"

The "Self-evaluation Guide" (see Appendix B) describes standards for a career information system in six areas: organization, information development, marketing and user services, delivery systems, evaluation, and finance. As soon as notice is given by the Standards and Accreditation Committee that the accreditation process is underway, information as requested in the self-evaluation guide must be gathered.

b. The Status Report

The status report (see Appendix C) is developed by the system seeking accreditation. It must include answers to questions in the "Self-evaluation Guide" and additional information as listed

in the table of contents of the status report. A copy of the status report will be transmitted to the Standards and Accreditation Committee. If already available, the candidate may elect to submit a copy of its year-end progress report in lieu of a new status report. However, items covered in the status report format must be included in the year-end report or provided as a supplement to the report.

c. On-Site Visits

A two-day visit to the system seeking accreditation is usually needed for review by an association accreditation team. The candidate system should submit a letter authorizing a visit and make all necessary preparations for the accrediation team.

3. Time and Distribution of Documents

The candidate will submit to the chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee three copies of the status report, including the completed self-evaluation guides and a letter authorizing an on-site visit not less than six (6) weeks prior to the scheduled visitation date. The chairperson will distribute the materials to other team members.

4. The Accreditation Team

a. Appointment

The chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee will appoint each accreditation team with the consent of the president of the association.

b. Composition

A Standards and Accreditation Committee member or designee will serve as team chairperson with two members from within or outside of the Standards and Accreditation Committee. Each team will be composed of staff members from accredited systems of career information with knowledge in the areas of organization, information development, marketing and user services, delivery systems, evaluation and system finance.

c. System Notification

Following scheduling of the evaluation visit, the director of the candidate system will receive the names of the prospective accreditation team members for comments and observations. The Standards and Accreditation Committee member assigned to the system is available for consultation on the composition of the evaluation team.

5. The On-Site Visit

a. Arrangements

When the accreditation team is complete, the team chairperson will arrange with the director of the candidate system for a mutually convenient date for the on-site visit, accomodations and travel. The chairperson will confer with other team members and notify the committee member assigned to the system of the arrangements. The team chairperson will confer with the director of the candidate system and team members planning for the accreditation visit. A summary of procedures for on-site accreditation teams can be obtained from the association.

b. Conducting the On-Site Visit

The length of the visit is ordinarily two days. This schedule may be extended by the team chairperson. Team members will meet with the candidate system director and other designated staff members for an initial discussion at the start of the visit. They will then proceed with the evaluation. They will hold conferences and interviews, gather, verify and assess data, and meet periodically to discuss their findings. Upon completion of the evaluation, they will meet again with the director and the designated members of the staff for an exit interview.

c. Financing the On-Site Visit

An institution is billed for the on-site visit prior to the team visit according to a schedule of fees for evaluation and consultant services. Fee information can be obtained from the association.

6. The Accreditation Report

a. Responsibility

An accreditation report will be drafted by the team to include a discussion of findings organized into six sections: organization, information development, marketing and user services, delivery systems, evaluation, and system finance. The report will also include the team's recommendation for accreditation. The team chairperson assumes the responsibility for preparing the report. Team members ordinarily submit their written contributions to the chairperson within one week after the visit.

b. Distribution of Draft Copy

The chairperson will send a copy of the draft report, including a final page stating the accreditation recommendation and the reasons for the recommendation, to the director of the candidate system, the team members, and the chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee for comment.

c. Categories

The accreditation recommendation will fall into one of three categories: approved, disapproved, or conditional. The conditional category will be used when the team recommends changes which are agreed to by the candidate system. Approval is conditional upon the candidate system making the agreed upon changes. The report is marked draft for correction of errors of fact only--for internal distribution at the discretion of the (applicant system) director.

d. Final Report Preparation

Upon receipt of comments on the draft from the director of the candidate system and from the team members, the team chairperson will prepare the final team report and forward the original copy, including the recommendation page, to the chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee. The chairperson will forward the final report to the president of the association. The final report should be submitted within six (6) weeks of the evaluation visit.

e. Distribution

The office of the president of the association will duplicate the official evaluation report, including the final page stating the accreditation recommendation and the reasons for the recommendation, and mail copies to the director of the candidate system and to members of the accreditation team.

f. Written Response

The candidate system director will be invited to review and to make a written response to the accreditation report and its recommendations. If the candidate system chooses to make an official written response, it is submitted to the president of the association, with a copy to the team chairperson.

7. Decision on Accreditation

The candidate system director and the chair of the accreditation team are invited to appear before the board of directors of the association to discuss the evaluation report and its recommendations at the next scheduled meeting of the association board of directors, subject to notice requirements. If this course is chosen, additional copies of the candidate system director's written response and the final evaluation report will be forwarded to each board member not less than one month prior to the scheduled association meeting by the president of the association.

8. Announcement of Decision

   a. Notification of Decision

      Upon completion of the decision-making process the candidate system director is officially notified by letter of the action taken by the association.

   b. Reconsideration of Decision

      The director of the candidate system must file a request for reconsideration not later than sixty (60) days following the meeting at which the action is taken.

C. Full Members (reaffirmation of accreditation)

The program for reaffirmation of accreditation for members is the same as that for candidates for accreditation except:

1. Initiation of the Application

   a. Accreditation Cycle

      Reaffirmation of accreditation is on a pre-arranged visitation cycle. Following the initial accreditation, each member will be evaluated every three years. The chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee notifies the full member six months in advance of the evaluation visit. A system undergoing substantial changes should notify the association well in advance in order to initiate the necessary procedures.

   b. Documents

      The chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee is responsible for making sure that the full member system has all pertinent documents, such as self-evaluation instruments, which are to be completed. These documents are to be provided to the member system no less than four months prior to the evaluation visit. Documents must be returned to the chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee no less than six weeks prior to the scheduled evaluation visit.

2. Preparation for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

   a. On-Site Visits

      Based on the completed system status report, the Standards and Accreditation Committee may decide that an on-site evaluation visit should be scheduled. If this is the case, the system to be reaccredited will submit a letter authorizing a visit and make necessary preparations.

b. Decision Regarding On-Site Visits

Upon submission of the completed status report the chairperson of the Standards and Accreditation Committee decides on the necessity for an on-site visit after conferring with all members of the committee and the director of the system seeking reaccreditation.

D. Distribution of the List of Accredited Systems

An institution granted candidacy, accreditation, or reaccreditation by the association is listed in appropriate national journals or publications. In addition, a list of those systems approved for accreditation will be forwarded annually to all Chief State School Officers, the National and State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees and other appropriate agencies.

APPENDICES

ASSOCIATION OF COMPUTER-BASED SYSTEMS FOR CAREER INFORMATION

ACSCI President's Office
1025 West Johnson Street
964 Educational Sciences Building
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

ACSCI Secretary-Treasurer's Office
Science Lab #2
The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington 98505

Associate Membership Application

1. Organization's name, address and telephone number (include area code):

2. Chief official's name, title, address and agency affiliation:

3. Geographical area served (describe area, population and user groups):

4. Status of system development (briefly describe length of time in service or development, system information files, data collection and storage, delivery system and users):

5. Organizational structure:

6. Funding and budget

7. Future plans

8. Other information appropriate to application (you may attach reports, etc. as appendices).

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APPENDIX B

STANDARDS AND SELF-EVALUATION GUIDES FOR SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

1. Organization

Standard 1.1. An organization should include key institutions representing both producers and users of career information.

A. List the organizations participating in policy-making for your system.

B. How were these organizations selected?

C. Are there current or projected users of your system which are not represented by these organizations? If not, why not?

Standard 1.2. A written charter, constitution, or by-laws should govern the policies of the system.

A. Is a governing document available and up-to-date?

B. What formal and informal agreements are specified with the participating or supporting organizations?

C. What policies and procedures are adopted to carry out the charter, constitution or by-laws?

D. Do the charter, constitution or by-laws set the principal purpose of the organization as the development and computer-based delivery of career information?

Standard 1.3. Management of the system should be within the system's defined service area.

A. What is the system's service area?

B. Is the central office for the system located in the service area?

C. Are other offices organized to bring user services support to significant user populations?

Standard 1.4. The system should have a director or chief executive officer to coordinate and manage operations, to provide leadership to the organization and to serve as liaison to advisory bodies.

A. Who is the director?

B. What requirements were used to select the director? Attach job description.

C. What are the incumbent's qualifications for the job? Attach resume.

D. Is the incumbent knowledgeable about system policies and operations? If not, why not?

Standard 1.5. Professional staff members should be available to develop information, manage the delivery system and assist user agencies in disseminating information to end-user clients.

A. List the staff (by full-time equivalencies). What are their assigned tasks? Attach job descriptions.

B. Are key staff trained in appropriate disciplines and have they had training and experience which qualify them for their positions? Attach resumes.

Standard 1.6. Management should provice in-service training for existing and new staff.

A. What training needs have been identified?

B. What programs have been planned or initiated to satisfy these needs?

C. What qualifies the trainers for the task?

2. Information Development

Career information generally includes both occupational and education information. Whether a system develops occupational or education information, or both, it should operate a thorough information development program. A system delivering occupational information should meet Standards 2.1-2.7. A system delivering education information should meet Standards 2.7-2.13.

Standard 2.1. The number and types of occupations should cover 90% of total employment in the system's service area.

A. What method was used for selecting occupations? Did the method employed use data on total employment, comments from users and counselors, and projected demand occupations based upon national, state and local surveys?

Standard 2.2. In developing topics of occupational information, any topic selected should have an empirical base.

Standard 2.3. A system should develop information which adequately describes the occupation. Occupational topics may include but not be limited to the following:

A. Dictionary of Occupational Titles

1. Is the DOT code based upon the fourth edition of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles?

2. Does the assigned DOT code reflect the contents of the occupational description?

B. Duties topic

1. Does the duties topic describe the purpose of the occupation, the responsibilities held by employees, and tasks performed?

2. Are the primary duties of the occupation identified?

C. Abilities topic (These are natural abilities or capacities for learning rather than learned skills.)

1. Are the primary abilities needed to perform the occupation identified?

2. Are the abilities described so that they are easily identified? E.g. working with hands versus manual dexterity.

D. Working conditions topic

1. When appropriate, does the topic describe the work setting, hours, physical demands, physical surroundings, hazards, pressures and travel requirements?

E. Equipment topic

1. When appropriate, does the topic describe the tools and equipment used in the occupation?

2. If complex tools are used, is the function of the tools described?

F. Earnings

1. Does the earnings topic reflect the current beginning wage?

2. Are union and non-union wages identified?

3. Does the earnings topic reflect wages for experienced workers?

4. Are salaries reported on an appropriate basis, i.e., hourly, weekly, monthly, or yearly?

5. Are wages reported to take into account regional differences of the state or nation?

G. Employment outlook topic

1. Does the topic outline the projected employment for the occupation?

2. Does the topic identify factors which may influence the projected supply and demand?

H. Training and education topic

1. Are high school courses listed which might be useful and/or required for a person entering this occupation? If relevant, are post-secondary courses identified?

2. Are all applicable on-the-job, apprenticeship and post-secondary programs identified?

3. If relevant, are licensing requirements identified?

4. If appropriate, is previous work experience identified as a method of preparation?

I. Methods of entry topic

1. Does the topic describe all common methods of entrance?

2. If the occupation is not entry level, what qualifies a person to enter the occupation?

Standard 2.4. Format, style and language levels of the occupational description should be presented so that they are easily understood by a diverse population.

1. What is the reading level used? Why?

2. What method is used for determining the reading level of the occupational description?

3. Are the statements impartial? Are evaluative terms avoided? Is orientation or bias toward one kind of work, career preparation, education or user avoided?

4. Does the description avoid racial, sexual and other status references or stereotypes in both titles and contents?

5. Are output descriptions appropriate to the terminal printout capability and the attention span of the user?

Standard 2.5. A system should use data that are current and valid.

1. Is the staff aware of the federal, state and local agencies which produce occupational data? Have they obtained copies of this data?

2. Can the staff identify the strengths and limitations of the resources used?

3. How is the library of printed resources updated? Are adequate monies budgeted for this task?

4. Do staff adequately document the resources used for developing occupational topics?

Standard 2.6. All occupational information should be validated and updated at least yearly.

1. What procedures are outlined for staff to update information? How frequently is the information updated?

2. Does the staff use a validation process for updating the occupational information?

   a. How many validators review each occupation?

   b. Are the validators employed in the occupation which they are reviewing? When appropriate, are the validators representative of education, labor and industry?

   c. How often are the descriptions reviewed?

d. What methods are used for recording validators' comments regarding this information?

e. Are validators' names, addresses and comments easily accessible to the staff?

f. Are adequate guidelines provided to the validators to assist them in reviewing the occupation?

g. How often are validators added or deleted from the validation process?

3. Are means provided for users and interested parties to provide feedback to the staff?

Standard 2.7. If an accessing strategy is used, an empirical relationship should exist between characteristics of the user and those of the occupations or education programs in the system.

1. What accessing strategy does the system use?

2. By what method is the relationship between information and user established?

3. Is this relationship based upon standardized research methods?

4. Does staff fully understand the process of assigning/coding these traits? How were the needed skills developed?

5. Does the text of the occupational information support the coding of these traits? In what ways?

6. Do the questions developed in the access strategy conform to current career development theory and practice? How?

Standard 2.8. The number and types of post-secondary educational programs should cover all significant instructional programs in the state or region served.

1. What method was used for selecting instructional programs?

2. Do the program files cover all significant instructional programs and institutions in the state or region served?

Standard 2.9. A system should develop information that adequately describes the basic characteristics of the program. Education topics may include but not be limited to the following: program objectives, specialties, degrees conferred, sample courses, and a comprehensive list of schools offering the program. Whenever possible, an occupational objective should be given for programs, but explicit occupational objectives should not be listed when there are none.

1. What method was used to collect information about schools offering specific programs?

2. Were the lists of schools offering programs validated? How?

3. Are all schools in the system represented in the program files?

4. Are data on occupational objectives supported in the program files?

Standard 2.10. The number and types of post-secondary educational institutions should include only schools that are accredited or licensed by recognized organizations.

1. What schools are included?

2. What organization accredits or licenses them?

3. Can information about school openings and closings be obtained during the year?

Standard 2.11. School information topics should include, but not be limited to, general information, admission, housing costs, financial aid, and student services. Other detailed information should be provided as available and applicable.

1. What information items are included about schools in the system?

Standard 2.12. School information should be consistent to enhance comparability of information items among schools.

1. Do information items cover similar subjects to enable the user to compare information for several schools?

Standard 2.13. Systems may have additional files appropriate to their needs which enhance system capability.

1. What are these files?

2. What is the purpose of each file?

3. Are these files developed and maintained in accordance with standards previously described (i.e., updated annually, accurate, comprehensive, etc.)?

3. Marketing and User Services

Standard 3.1. A marketing plan should be followed.

1. How is the population to be served identified?
2. How are key people/agencies identified?
3. How are procedures for marketing spelled out?
4. How are rate structures identified?
5. How are computer access capabilities and services identified?

Standard 3.2. Promotion of additional user sites should be an on-going function.

1. Are promotional materials available?
2. Are contacts systematically made?
3. Are referrals followed-up in a reasonable period of time?
4. Are demonstrations conducted as needed?
5. Is special assistance provided with terminal hook up?
6. Are follow-up demonstrations and explanations provided?
7. Is demonstration time provided?
8. Has research been done to identify different types of potential users?
9. Are records kept on referrals and demonstrations?

Standard 3.3. Public information should be available in concise, accurate and effective form.

1. Are materials for general distribution describing the system available? Attach samples.
2. Are public information releases/newsletters, etc. circulated and in evidence?
3. Are public relations activities carried on?

Standard 3.4. User materials should be well designed, easy to use, appealing to users and readily available.

1. Are materials accurate?
2. Are materials easily used and understood by users?
3. Are materials readily available in appropriate quantity?
4. Is the reading level appropriate to the audience?
5. Are materials designed to promote interest and use?

Standard 3.5. Training for use of the system should be provided.

1. Is a training plan in evidence?
2. Are all new users promptly and properly trained?
3. Is in-service held annually for all users?
4. Are user problems promptly handled?
5. Are new items or changes in the system or information appropriately communicated to users?
6. Does evidence exist that system use problems are corrected promptly?

Standard 3.6. A system of communication between marketing staff and users should be in effect.

1. Is a newsletter or other communications device effectively employed?
2. Are provisions made for user feedback over and above annual evaluation?
3. Are records kept of user feedback and problems?

Standard 3.7. The system should be available to all clients/students during their regular day.

1. Do all clients/students have access to the system during their regular attendance hours?

Standard 3.8. The delivery system should be available as part of the counseling and instructional processes and also for independent client use.

1. What evidence is there that the delivery system is integrated with counseling and instructional programs of the user agencies?

2. How is independent client use fostered?

3. Is all information available to all users in a reasonable period of time?

Standard 3.9. Costs for the delivery system should be at a level per user which will make it feasible for user agencies or local or state governments to financially support them.

1. Describe the cost schedule. What is the estimated per user cost?

2. How is the pricing schedule developed?

3. Are user agencies consulted in determining new fee schedules?

Standard 3.10. A coordinator should be identified at each user site.

1. Is there a list of coordinator names and addresses?

2. Are tasks and responsibilities identified for the coordinators?

3. Is there a plan for coordinator training?

4. Delivery Systems

Delivery of career information to users includes two broad functions, accessing and dissemination. Accessing is the strategy or approach used by the individual to search out and explore information. Dissemination is concerned with provision and availability of information to a wide variety of users. The following operating standards for accessing and dissemination apply.

Standard 4.1. The system should employ at least two media of delivery.

1. What are the delivery system media?

Standard 4.2. The delivery system should be demonstrably effective with persons of varying ability and experience.

1. What is the range of ability levels and background of current users?

2. Have there been reports of ineffectiveness with any of the user groups? If so, what action was taken?

Standard 4.3. The delivery system should present information in an attractive and interesting manner so as to motivate users to continue use of the system and to further explore occupational areas.

1. What evidence is there of the presence of this motivational factor in the delivery system?

Standard 4.4. The delivery system components should be user-operable so that independent usage may be fostered.

1. What feedback has been provided by user agencies concerning ease of usage by the individual user?

Standard 4.5. The system should provide user agencies with printed instructions on how to use the various components. These instructions should be distributed to users and should include directions for operating hardware components and descriptions of the information files available. The instructions should be written at a reading level appropriate to a wide variety of intended users.

1. Are booklets or operating instructions readily available to system users?

2. Describe the number and types of booklets or operating instructions distributed by the system.

3. Have feedback reports from user agencies indicated any problems with the user materials? If so, what action was taken?

Standard 4.6. Materials to which users are referred by the system should be available in an easily accessed information center.

1. What method is used by the system staff to determine if this standard is being observed at the user site?

2. If this standard is not being observed, what action is taken by the system? If such action has been taken, what were the results?

Standard 4.7. The statements made in one medium should be consistent and compatible with those made in other files or media; a reference system should exist from one delivery vehicle to another.

1. What is the process and staff responsibility for insuring that consistent information is given in all the files and delivery media?

2. What method is used for referring users from one delivery vehicle to another?

Standard 4.8. Any delivery system hardware components required should be standard equipment that is reliable, widely available, and applicable to a variety of users. Computers in use should be subject to minimum "down-time" and software should be "bug-free" so as not to inconvenience users.

1. What problems have users reported concerning hardware reliability? How have such problems been handled?

2. Describe the process used by the system in choosing or recommending hardware components to user agencies.

3. How often is computer software checked for reliability or updated?

4. Is there a system staff member responsible for delivery system hardware and software supervision?

5. Is there a back-up system available in case the primary computer is not in operation?

Standard 4.9. The delivery system should provide a copy or a summary of its basic information to the user for future reference.

1. Is such a printed copy of information available to users regardless of the type of delivery system or hardware component used? If not, why not?

2. Are users allowed to obtain any amount of material from the system? If not, please explain.

Standard 4.10. The delivery system should be able to house all information related to the topics listed for information development, including localized information.

1. What space problems exist at the present time, if any?

Standard 4.11. The system should have updating capability so that new information can be entered into the system and made available to users within at least six months of the time it becomes available. Some exceptions exist, primarily, data items that are published and are accurate on a yearly basis.

1. Describe the update and distribution process.

2. Which files are updated on an annual cycle?

Standard 4.12. A user should be able to obtain the information desired which is available through that medium of delivery before leaving the system or within a reasonably short period of time after leaving.

1. What help is provided to users who are having difficulty in locating information in the system?

2. Have users reported an excessive time lag in receiving information?

Standard 4.13. The accessing strategies or approaches used to obtain information should be available both in a direct access and a structured search mode depending on the preferences of the user.

1. Are both types of accessing strategies available to system users? If not, why not?

Standard 4.14. If an accessing strategy provides for the use of a client's records (e.g. test scores, class rank, interest inventories, etc.), the client should be aware of any data which are input into the system. Furthermore, the use of client records should not prohibit a client from continuing exploration in any chosen occupational area. Client records, records of individual system use, or any other personal data obtained or used by the system for whatever purpose should be adequately safeguarded so that security and confidentiality will be maintained.

1. Does the delivery system require or allow the use of the client's personal records?

2. Are personal records used to limit system use in any way?

3. What safeguards exist to protect confidentiality of records, if personal records are used?

4. If personal records are used, how are clients made aware of this fact?

Standard 4.15. The delivery system should be accessible to adequately serve the user.

1. Is the information delivered by the system available at times and places convenient for the user? Is printed material easily accessible to the user?

2. Does the system have standards describing the amount of equipment and materials per site?

3. Have system staff visits to user agencies shown that this standard is being observed?

Standard 4.16. Costs for the delivery system components should be a per user level which makes it feasible for user agencies or local or state governments to financially support use.

1. Describe the system component costs including estimated per user costs.

Standard 4.17. The system should have a staff member responsible for supervising the delivery system. The staff member should be available to user agencies for consultation concerning the delivery system.

1. If there is a staff member assigned to supervision of the delivery system, what is the title and percentage of time allocated to such duties?

5. Evaluation

Standard 5.1. An annual evaluation should be in evidence.

1. Is a plan for evaluation in evidence?
2. Are both users and staff involved?
3. Are third-party persons involved in the evaluation?

Standard 5.2. A plan for utilizing evaluation results should be in evidence.

1. What use is made of evaluation data?
2. What benefits have been derived from evaluation information?

Standard 5.3. A system research and development effort should be in place, with adequate resources allocated, to ensure that the delivery system keeps up with technological improvements in the field.

1. Is such an effort currently being made?
2. How does the system make adequate research and development resources available for design, pilot-testing and evaluation as well as implementation of improvements?

6. System Finance

Standard 6.1. Financial planning should be in evidence.

1. What are the sources of operating funds?
2. Who is the system fiscal agent?
3. What is the process for developing the budget?
4. Is an audit conducted? If completed, what were the results?
5. How is management informed about the financial status of the system?

Standard 6.2. The expense budget should be adequate to provide services expected by the users.

1. What evidence exists that funds available are adequate to operate the system? If funds are not currently adequate, what plans are underway to correct the situation?
2. Who are the largest financial supporters of the system? What percent of the budget does each provide? Which supporter groups are users? How reliable is each of these sources of funding?

APPENDIX C

FORMAT FOR THE SYSTEM STATUS REPORT

Cover Page

Preface

Title Page - (Include staff names and titles of those who prepared the report.)

Overview of Program - (Five pages or less. Summarize all major areas listed in the body of the report.)

Body of Report

I. Organization and Administration
II. Information Delivery
III. Marketing and User Services
IV. Delivery Systems
V. Evaluation
VI. System Finance
VII. Future Plans

Use the Standards and Self-Evaluation Guides applicable to each section to determine the information to be included.

Appendices - as needed